

MEIKO SATOMURA! Ikeda! SONOKO KATO! Candy Okutsu! NAKAMAKI! CHIGUSA!! and other stuff I heard and saw this week!

Howdy!

Welcome to DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW # 28! This week I got a Hiney-Load of tapes from Ollie and Mike so I gotta lot of ground to cover and I think everybody got their I Worship Glenn tape, so I'll kick off with that particular whip ass batch of grappling.:)

-The GAEA Champ Forum (GLENN!!) with Reyna Jubuki vs Infernal KAORU KICKED ASS pretty hard during the main event and faultered slightly during the youngsters match. It starts off with the introduction of Ichiki, a young tiny gal formerly of IWA. Her premiere match is tagging with the AWE\$SOME Toshie Uematsu vs the surly punks from OZ's army- Nagashima (who is showing glimmers of rulingness) and the AWE\$SOME Sugar Sato. This match began real well with Ichiki doing a lot of nifty flying moves. She's very proficient in the midgrade Lucha roll-ups and head scissors and on that base, the tutelage of Chigusa and Hokuto will make her a fine, if not spectacular, wrestler in time. The match gets kinda lost in the middle, where all four kinda spin their wheels for a while, a very odd thing for the super tight, psychology-laden matches that GAEA usually serves up. It can be unspectacular or overly-simplistic in its scope, but there is usually a foundation to every match that gives it a direction. The main event was Freakin Great. Very All Japan in the way it built, with KAORU making a fatal mistake early outside the ring that would finish her off later, Akira Hokuto selling to the hilt and climaxing with the state-of-the-art crippling suplexes that you usually have to look at MUCH uglier people, like Steve Williams:),to acheive. The match goes through a highflying phase with moonsaults and toprope somersaults and what have and that sets up the sell-a-thon where they struggle to get back in the ring, which sets up the onslaught of fantabulous finishing moves. KAORU hits two ASS-KICKING TAKAbomb II's and Akira wins the Steve Williams "you-might-die-from-this" award with the most HELLISH looking T-Bone Tazplex ever. KAORU couldn't have been digging it, as she is thrown directly on her head. On a side note, the Infernal mask was very middle of the pack, not very Jd'-ish at all.:)

-The BattlARTS that Glen sent was yet still another improvement on the one I had seen previously, as these guys really start figuring out where they are going with their very odd mongrel style. The Ikeda/Alexander Otsuka vs those 2 UWFi type of kick-and-suplex guys was BattlARTS at its most realized. It was a true mishmash of styles, weaving in and out from highly worked pro-style (Otsuka hits a freakin GIANT SWING, for God's sake!) to what looks like all-out shootfighting at the end. I don't know why this hasn't caught on yet- it's very post-modern with the wreckless combinations of highly divergent styles. They use shootstyle, but have saves like pro style. One tag partner is worked over and beaten until he makes a hot tag, all the while, not a single running of the ropes is attempted and they work him over with shootkicks and submission attempts. This stuff is freaky and I dig it; I mean the ending is SO hot and TRULY stiff as all Hell, that I was kinda fascinated. The other matches were a lot less. The Minoru match was kinda neat, as he is like the other young punks of BattlARTS, the seediest looking teens this side of an IWA audience.:) The first match sucked, so everything isn't looking up.:)

- I watched IWA 2nd Year Final Battle (OLLIE!!!) and it had the truly grim Nakamaki vs Chacott (who is Fuyuki or Keichi Takano or somebody). It was a barbed wire thumbtack match and Nakamaki proves once again what pathetic sick fuck he truly is as he is powerbombed into thumbtacks and he also tries to press his head into the thumbtacks to make them stick to his head. A good time was had by all.:)

-I watch New Japan's Super Powers Clash from 89 (MIKE!!!)and GOD! that was too much fun! Where are these Russian guys now? RINGS? Extreme Fighting? The guy who wrestled Buzz Sawyer (Zaniev?) was the deal, what did he do after this. The late Buzz Sawyer wasn't afraid to hit a phat-ass perfect German Suplex with a bridge, and then do the AWA screwjob finish which brought back a flood of memories that I had hoped to have drank away in my mid-twenties. The Chosyu/Hashimoto match was pretty good. Hash looks a lot better now with the Elvis look than he looked then with the Steve Miller look.:) The Vader matches were a peck of fun and the Bigelow match was a waste of everybody's time. The announcing by Bockwinkle was hilariously bad (I love the cross-armbreaker being called a headscissors).

-Ollie sent all the GAEA that I had missed over the last few months and there were about a zillion highlights. Candy Okutsu vs Toshie Uematsu was pretty choice, with Toshie showing she can hang with the big girls even if she hasn't passed them yet. Okutsu was the underrated great worker that she always is, as she guided Toshie to a match with quite a few really hot sections, especially when they are trading fabulous rollups. This was a good precursor of the really good Uematsu/Hikari match that would happen six months later, after Toshie had really hit her stride. The final of the rookie tourney was the pinnacle of the embarrassment of riches that is the rookie class of 96 of GAEA, as Meiko Satomura and Sonoko Kato showed that they are going to be truly special in the years to come. Their ring savvy is tremendous and their sense of timing and selling is uncanny for two gals who are so young and green. Kato isn't as good as she would become months later (obviously) but her basics of a really good wrestler are everpresent in this formative match between the soon-to-be WAY exciting tag partners. Satomura has expanded her repertoire immensely since this match as it seems her whole deal at the beginning of this year was limited to submission attempts, which made for a REALLY good match against Yamada, but gets kinda one dimensional when it limits the scope of what her opponent can do, and that is definately not a problem anymore for the hot tempered little firebrand.:) The ones who don't pop out here that really pop out later in the year is Sugar Sato and Nagashima, as the heel-turn has focused their style and helped them sort out the way their matches would go later.

-The Chigusa/ Devil Masami match for the AAW title, in Singapore, was a great low-impact, high psychology woman's match that is becoming the trademark of GAEA when the ladies over 18 get in the ring. Devil Masami sells so WEIRD. My fave is when Chigusa hits her with one of those spinning jumping kicks that she does and Devil stares with her eyes really wide through the hair that is in her face and tries to look corpse-like. She is very Regal-esque in her facials. Chigusa wins the title and a TV set in the end for some reason that I don't want to understand.:)

-I've calmed down about Nitro and my outrage at shithead going against Galaxy, and Roid Train going over LaParka. I dug Rey/Juventud and it looks like Malenko and Guerrerro are going deeply into the arms of WCW Angledom like their compadre Benoit, but at least they get to wrestle each other and Waltman while our boy Pegasus is stuck in the feud that refuses to end. As for the ECW stuff, all the guys who can work are taken or weren't there. Lance Storm would have been a good idea for this. Hell! Lance vs Miguel Perez would have been GREAT! Miguel Perez vs Savio Vega actually would be good. Perez was a coup. What the hell was Shamrock doing? He is giving up an ASS-STOMPER of a match against Bas Rutten to waste time in the WIFF. Say it ain't so.

NANIWA~!